

**BEYOND NATURALISM, TOWARDS HOPEFUL
HUMANISM :**

A Selective Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.

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AN ABSTRACT

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A B S T R A C T

BEYOND NATURALISM TOWARDS HOPEFUL HUMANISM:

A Selective Study of Mulk Raj Anand's Novels.

The main thrust of the thesis: an emphasis on how Anand goes beyond the confines of Literary Naturalism towards hopeful humanism which would remain his final pronouncement on mankind, his credo which he wrote into his novels.

Chapterisation

Chapter I: Introduction to Literary Naturalism in the European, American and the Indian context.

Chapter II: Social heredity: - Textual study of Anand's novels keeping in mind the evils of casteism.

Chapter III: Social environment: study of the under-privileged classes, potentially trapped heroes by religious and traditional conventions which form the social environment.

Chapter IV: Hopeful Humanism: Focuses on humanism in general, Anand's special brand of humanism and Bhakti being the integrating factor relating naturalism and humanism.

Conclusion: The vital importance of Anand in the present day context. The need for a scientific and pragmatic approach. The novels of Mulk Raj Anand being a necessary fore runner to the contemporary Dalit debates and search for cultural identity.

Methodology: (a) Application of the theoretical framework of Literary Naturalism and Humanism to Anand's novels. (b) Case book and textual study of his novels.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

So I struggled to weigh up the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European traditions and the Himalayas of my Indian past, all my senses aching to realize the significance of the history of my country....¹

Literary Naturalism claims to present a more accurate picture of life. It implies not only a special selection of subject matter, in a special literary manner; but a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a specific philosophical thesis which held that man belongs to the order of nature and does not have any connection with the religious or spiritual world. He is therefore, merely a higher order animal whose character and fortunes are determined by two kinds of natural forces; heredity and environment. He inherits his personal traits and compulsive instincts and is subject to the social and economic forces, the class and milieu into which he is born.

Naturalism in other words, is a scientific and objective representation of contemporary reality and life by using the experimental method. Although the trends initiated by early naturalists continue till today, the form and techniques have undergone some changes and modifications. While Hippolyte Taine had fostered the idea of heredity and environment as vital factors in the development of mentalities, the fountain head of Literary Naturalism can be traced to Emile Zola.

Zola had imbibed the scientific ideas on heredity and environment. His purpose was to show that heredity and environmental influences, gave common characteristics to a family of individuals who appeared apparently dissimilar. Hence naturalism as Zola termed, involves the application to the literature of two scientific principles; determination or the belief that character, temperament and ultimately, behaviour are determined by (a) the forces of heredity and environment, (b) the historical moment, coupled with the experimental method which entails the objective recording of precise data in controlled conditions. Naturalism in America, however, was not subject to the same literary credo as was accepted in other countries; the early documents of the movement in America, by Garland and Edward Howe, were marked by a sense of bitter protest against the desperation of contemporary life in the Middle West but in all these writers native forces mingle with the theories of European naturalism. C.C Walcutt, however, explains that naturalism:

Moves among three patterns of ideas the religion of reason, nature, the attack on the dualist of the past; the recognition and slowly growing fear of natural forces that man might study but could not control.²

From these definitions mentioned above, certain characteristic features of naturalism became clear, however, Literary Naturalism made a late appearance in the Indian scenario.

The naturalism of Tagore and Premchand was profoundly influenced by their mystic attitude towards the ultimate truths of human existence and destiny. It was left to the younger generation of novelists to make the direct frontal assaults on a reality

which lay rooted in the present and the immediate. The fiction of these younger realists and naturalists inspite of its ephemeral enthusiasms has a raw, unshaped yet a heady power about it. Its force was straight, direct and disturbing and it is to this group of writers, that Mulk Raj Anand's novels must be traced.

Literary Naturalism varies with each individual author, because even though it aims at an objective representation of life, the point of view of the individual novelist differ from each other. For example, in the Indian context:

The novel emerges as a new literary form, not because bourgeoisie, patrician and people as such are different from the nights of chivalrous romance but because the sociological awareness, the totally new factor became the focusing development of the plot. In the simplest possible terms, society is now the destiny of the individual, the horizon under. Which the individual lives in determined by the pressure, power and the control of society.³

Social heredity and environment is thus a major shaping factor in a man's life. Mulk Raj Anand, the pioneer of the Literary Naturalism in the Indian context of the view that man does not suffer due to his tragic flaw as per Aristotlian theory, but because his destiny is controlled and shaped by society, which makes for his social heredity and environment.

Keeping in mind naturalism in the European and the American context, Literary Naturalism in India can be considered as an extreme form of naturalism best exemplified by Anand in his major novels. Naturalism emphasizes the twin forces of:

1. Heredity and Environment.

2. An important aspect of Naturalism is determinism
3. Naturalism emphasizes Natural Man
4. Naturalism flowered in the European context with Zola as its major exponent.
5. Stephen Crane emphasizes the environmental factor in Literary Naturalism in the American context.
6. In the Indian context Anand gave to Naturalism an Indian flavour which he emphasized social heredity or casteism and Environment as eminent factors in individual development.

CHAPTER II

Social Heredity

“What status should be attributed to those who are placed even lower in the social hierarchy? There is no karma considered for them, they must reside away from the other castes in a space....⁴

The characteristic features of all living beings are unalterably fixed by heredity. Our family traits were determined by the heredity constitution of our ancestors and our personal traits by our parents. Race, Sex and mental capacity which we are born are fixed and cannot be changed. In the same way, the social heredity of caste system cannot be altered and thus passes unto their progeny. This caste system is usually characterized by hierarchy whose members has hereditary professions and is segregated strictly by rules restricting social interchange to persons of the same caste. Their social status is based on the complex ritual of purity and impurity. These untouchables have been ascribed not only the maximum but are also seen as permanent pollutants, an assumption which is frequently based on the special nature of their hereditary professions. It is because of this, that the untouchables have been excluded from the social and ritual space of the other castes. The present study will clearly indicate how the social heredity of caste system becomes a great catalyst in the development and shapes the destiny of man. In this respect, Anand transcends naturalism and succeeded in striking a universal note. This is reflected in both, his novels *Untouchable* (1935) and *The Road* (1963) where social heredity and its role in making and unmaking the destiny of man became the core of his fictional writing.

The protagonists of these novels are highly sensitive. Compassion and love, endurance and suffering are the fundamental experiences in their lives but the hereditary stigma which binds them for generations, prevents them from being socially accepted, and suppresses their freedom. The problem of the untouchable is the age-old social evil of the segregation of an individual who follows the hereditary profession of scavenging. The scavenger is an outcaste whose mere touch pollutes the people – a superstition that the three thousand years of racial and caste superiority have endangered. It is against this inhuman system that the protagonist of Anand's novels rebels in silence. *Untouchable (1935)* seems to be unique in the Indian literary experience of Naturalism. The novel encapsulates a single day in the life of the scavenger Bakha, and the whole drama of the misery of untouchability takes place which minutely describes the various humiliations suffered by the hero of the novel, in his regular rounds of cleaning the town. A man brushing past him, abuses and even slaps him; the Brahmin priest tries to molest his sister Sohini and when foiled, cries out 'polluted, polluted' in order to get Bakha beaten up by the public; the woman whom he requests for a loaf of bread throws it down from the upper storey of her house as to a dog and all the mute longings of Bakha for education are never fulfilled. These are the episodes in the drama of his psychological tragedy as determined by his own social status. Feeling strongly sensitive to the humiliations, Bakha made desperate attempts to retaliate but his revolutionary feelings lie buried in his heart. Aware of the limitations of the given social structure, he is unable to translate that protest into action, Saros Cowasjee comments:-

A superb specimen of humanity he seemed whenever he made the high resolve to say something, to go and do something, his fine form rising like a tiger at bay. And yet there was futility written on his face. He could not overstep the barrier which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weakness against him. He could not invade the magic circle which protects a priest from attack by anybody, especially by a low-caste man, so in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back, wild with torture, biting his lips, ruminating his grievances.⁵

Bakha encounters a deterministic universe which does not even recognize the identity of individuals. His social cosmos is governed by traditions and taboos imposed on him.

As a sequel to the events of the day, Bakha wanders homeless in the plains when his father turns him out of the house. In the evening when he returns home, there emerged three possible solutions to the problems of untouchability, a social malaise corroding the souls of millions. The conversion to Christianity, but unable to understand who Christ is, Bakha turns to Gandhi; yet again he finds, something mystical about Mahatma's solutions. Ultimately, he accepts the mechanization of the sanitary system as suggested by the poet. He returns to his father, the old world of filth and dirt but with the vision of the future India, free from the shackles of the past. The next novel which deals with the social heredity of the caste system is *The Road (1963)*, which is a reworking of the theme of the untouchable where Anand dramatizes, the destiny of an untouchable Bhikhu, who is a Bakha in a changed situation. Bhikhu unlike Bakha is seen as being more aware of his community status as he walks away at the end of *The Road (1963)* which is

indeed a road to destiny where liberation will become a reality. The quarter of a century that separate the two novels meant a lot of difference but not in the content of social naturalism that shapes the life of man.

The critical analysis which emerges from a textual study of the above novels are as follows:-

- (1) The heroes are aware of the inherited burden of casteism.
- (2) They accept it as an inevitable.
- (3) Though humiliated and broken in spirit they do not retaliate but wait for the system to change.
- (4) Bakha's acceptance of one of the three possible solutions offered.
 - (a) Conversion to Christianity.
 - (b) Gandhi's identifying of himself with the untouchables.
 - (c) The poet's suggestion of rapid industrialization.
- (5) Unlike the heroes of other literary naturalistic novels, Anand's heroes do not share much of the reaction of the "Natural Man".
- (6) While European and American Literary Naturalists have emphasized biological hereditary Anand's characters suffer from the social hereditary of caste system carrying with it divine sanctions and therefore are unable to react.

CHAPTER III

Social Environment

So great is the power of environment in the development of personality that it may outweigh inheritance.⁶

The results of the development of each individual are not determined by the heredity alone but also by a corresponding determinism of social environment itself and as long as it endures, the social man cannot escape its influence for he is trained within it and habituated to it and none of his desires are fulfilled unless he takes it into account.

Mulk Raj Anand while emphasizing the determinism of social environment in *Coolie (1936)* presents the individual's harrowing experiences in a hostile social set up. Munoo, the hero of the novel moves in an arch, from the village to town, from the town to the city and then upto the mountains where he is finally swept away to his doom. He explores the limit of his existence before he goes under. Munoo moves from Khangra Hills, with a suggestion that he shortly leaves his aunt and uncle in order to take up a job at the nearest town of Sham Nagar. This chapter immediately conveys with dramatic irony, the Arcadian happiness of an orphan against whom the malevolent form of society conspire. The second chapter relates the actions and reactions of Munoo as the domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram, a clerk in the Imperial Bank. The third chapter is concerned with the independent career as a worker in Prabha's pickle factory at Daulatpur. The fourth chapter however deals with the most eventful period of his life in Bombay; it makes the gradual transition of

Munoo from the innocence to the adolescence of experience under the loving care of Lakshmi, Hari and Ratan. And the last chapter is a study of the pretentious parvenus of the Anglo- Indian community in Simla, notably, Mrs. Mainwaring's unprincipled and immoral existence which finally results in the premature death of Munoo. The structural clarity and simplicity, the shifting scenes of action, the documentary manner of narration and the dire law of determinism possibly mark this out as an admirably panoramic prototype of proletarian naturalism. The central problem is the inhuman mechanics of economics determinism, the fatal evil is, not caste, but class. Poverty is the root cause of Munoo's tragedy whose life is severely circumscribed by the adverse circumstances.

In his other novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) which is thematically a sequel to *Coolie* (1936), Anand takes up where *Coolie* (1936) ends: the Anglo - Indian community's apathy and even antipathy in its relation with the Indians. The racial arrogance and the capitalistic exploitation of the British ultimately results in the death of the protagonist Gangu. Although the jealousies and squabbles of the Anglo-Indian officers in the McPherson Tea Plantation in Assam are elaborately expressed, the central character in this dramatic novel is the coolie, Gangu who migrates with his wife and children to Assam after eviction from his small rocky tract of land in the Punjab; his struggle to eke out a livelihood in the Tea Plantation and his eventual death at the hands of the inhuman assistant of the Estate, Reggie Hunt constitute the main action of the novel. It is replete with the atrocities of the English planters as represented by Reggie Hunt and Croft Cooke. The bitter feelings and the violent passions generated by the most object conditions of the plantation

life, dominate and decide the collective destiny of the coolies and their masters. The beautiful and the picaresque Tea Gardens becomes the dreadful 'green hill', following Reggie's ruthless suppression and reckless shooting of the agitated coolies, some of whom want to get away from the prison – house, that is plantation.

Gangu is a victim not a willing ally in his own degradation and misery like his counter parts Bakha, Bhikhu and Munoo. All of them are the victims of the oppressed and the doomed outcaste's proletariat whose fate and destiny is enslaved by the social heredity and environment.

Another victim of Anand's sociological environment appeared again in his trilogy – *The Village (1939)*, *Across the Black Waters (1940)* and *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)* which is perhaps the most faithful study of the individual in terms of the traditional social values and the new socialist forces. The thematic significance of the trilogy mainly lies in the protagonist's revolt against the conventional social values which in the end takes a pro-communist turn. The confrontation between the individual and the society decides the destiny of both the individual and society which forms the central pattern of action of the trilogy. *The Village (1939)* mainly reveals the inner conflict of Lalu as a result of the deterministic operation of the conventional environment. *Across the Black Waters (1940)* is as much a symbol of Lalu's spiritual education as it is a truthful tribute to the valor and the military genius of the Indian soldiers abroad during the First World War and finally, *The Sword and the Sickle (1942)* is a return of the native, Lalu Singh, to his own motherland after the war with an eagerness to disseminate the message of the revolution for the

upliftment of the Indian peasantry. The moving motive of the whole trilogy is the sociological determination of the individual's action as against his own free and natural impulses. However, a brief survey of the three novels will give a complete picture of conflict between man and society. What it attempts to portray is a dialectical process of man - society relationship which depends on the creative energy of the individual as well as on the potential forces of social system.

The Big Heart (1945) chronologically comes about a decade after *Untouchable (1935)* but the varied facets of naturalism are essentially the same. The issue is not caste, but the conflict between tradition and modernity, between the community of coppersmiths and the bourgeois capitalists who established a factory, depriving the majority of the coppersmiths of their traditional craft. The Machine Age has emerged, resulting in the dislocation and dire poverty of the craftsman.

Billiraman or Cat-Killers lane in Amritsar was swarming with the traditional tharthiars or coppersmiths who are the thrown out of employment owing to the establishment of a factory. The machine in the factory, roaring and squeaking, symbolizes the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Science and Technology. The tharthiars, or the coppersmiths, are subjected to an existence of utter misery and object poverty. Their hearts filled with an intense hatred of the machine that usurps their position in the society. Into this explosive situation enters Ananta from Bombay with his revolutionary philosophy and anti-traditional non-conformity. His irreverent unconventionality in living with Janki without marriage is resented by his community though his courage of conviction is greatly admired. The active



ignorance and the frayed tempers of the coppersmiths proved finally fatal, ending in the violent death of Ananta at the hands of Ralia, the frustrated and enraged coppersmith. The tragedy of sociological environment has taken a stage further in *The Big Heart (1945)*. This simply is the tragedy of a moral intelligence of the heart defeated not by its own flawed nature but by a diseased victim of society who symbolizes humanity's inability to control its environmental fate.

Another product of the unfortunate historical and environmental circumstances is the protagonist of Anand's another novel, *The Private Life of an Indian-Prince (1953)* in which an apparent dichotomy of the tradition of Anglo-Indian Literary Naturalism seems to manifest as it mainly concerns with the problem of a degenerate and debouched Indian prince in the post- Independence era of political turmoil which saw the accession of the princely states to the Indian Union. It presents a human drama in the midst of chaotic situation and has at its centre a prince himself, as a central figure in the political transition, whose tragedy is brought about by social as well as a personal causes. The decline and fall of monarchy in the state of Sham Pur coincides with the tragic destruction of the prince himself. It is a powerful impeachment of the bourgousie and the decadent aristocracy that have been historically responsible for the sordidness of life in the small principality of Sham Pur.

Maharaja Ashok Kumar known as Victor, wages a futile battle the forces of democracy unleashed in post-independence India. He resists the Union Government's pressure to merge his little state into the Indian Union, but ultimately he succumbs to the Instrument's of Accession. His fatal flaw, however, is his

romantic infatuation with Ganga Dasi, an illiterate scheming woman. Meanwhile, the affairs of the state are in a virtual mess. Both the feudal landlords and the peasants turn against him. The local politicians begin to fish in the troubled waters, and strife and intrigue are in the air. To add to the prince's discomfiture, Ganga Dasi takes another lover. Dispossessed of his kingdom and deserted by his mistress, he proceeds to London and somehow manages to get his rival, the lover of Ganga Dasi murdered. The act, however, recoils on him, and he does not get a crumb of comfort. He then plunges into despair, and drifting into the abyss of nothingness, finally ends up in a lunatic asylum.

Anand's last novel that deals with the social environment is *The Death of a Hero (1964)* in which the protagonist Maqbool Sherwani, a young man of Kashmiri sacrificed his life, fighting the Pakistani invaders during 1947 upheavals. The young Muslim freedom fighter Maqbool flees from Baramula to Srinagar when the Pakistani intruders forcibly occupy the place. He is then asked by the Indian leaders to return to his hometown in order to raise morale of the people caught in the grip of the terror. He re-enters Pakistan secretly but is soon discovered, persued and arrested. When asked to give up his membership of the Indian Kashmiri National Conference and join his Muslim brethren form Pakistan, he refused and ultimately was shot dead in cold blood after a ridiculous trial. *Death of a Hero (1964)* is thus, the practical martyrdom of a young man, Maqbool Sherwani.

The novel indicates the serious implications in the society and the human situation is seen in moral terms. The protagonist is pitted against the system which

thrives on in justice and exploitation. Instead of carrying on a crusade of action against the system, the protagonist of this novel believe in arousing the moral conscience of the perpetrators of injustice and exploitation. He is motivated by his belief that action produces immediate results but the consequence is not lasting whereas effects based on moral transformation have permanence. Love, generosity, an accommodating attitude and tolerance have the capacity to cleanse the human heart and drive away the evil permanently. Being a man of poetry rather than the radical spirit, a meaningful and successful revolution is needed. The circumstances cast him in a different mould that of a poet, ultimately leading to his political martyrdom. Maqbool's letter to his sister says:-

I know that you have always thought of me as somewhat of a hero, Noor. Always there was a light in your big eyes which said so. But, today, I want to write and tell you, so that you can tell everyone that I have never been anything but an aspirant to poetry. All my dreams will remain unfulfilled, because I am going to face death. But here, in our country, the most splendid deeds have been done by people, not because they were great in spirit, but because they could not suffer the tyrant's yoke, and learnt to obey their conscience.⁷

The positive message which the novel, a product of Indo-Anglian Literary Naturalism gives is that, in the long history of the evolution of human society, the cultivation of humanistic values can alone redeem the aberrant human experiences and that self-sacrifice will have a cleansing effect on a tyrant's heart. Hence a more humane and responsive social system is required in the transformation of a society. Thus Anand's emphasis lies beyond naturalism towards hopeful humanism, a shift in focus evident in his novels.

The critical analysis of the eight novels reveals the following:

- (i) The social environmental influences on man is all encompassing, for example Munoo, the protagonist of the novel:-

His ego is conditioned by the laws and customs of the society in which he had been born, the society whose caste and classes and forms had been determined by the self-seeking of the few, of the powerful, sought all the prizes of wealth, power and possession exactly as his superiors sought them.⁸

- (ii) The instinct for rebellion is stifled and thus resignation is aroused.
- (iii) There is however a tentative movement towards understanding:

And he (Gangu) wandered in all the shame of his hopeless life, shrunken by fear, broken and numbed by the hard implements of pain, surging with desire in the subterranean spaces of his being, crowned by a faint elation, tense and tearless. Then he looked again to the heavens: the pallid cup of the sky loomed above him, vast and comprehensive and still. He hung his head down in resignation, though it looked as if he waited for something, something he know not what.⁹

- (iv) The same pattern is repeated in the Trilogy. Lalu rebels against his own religious conventions, and is punished by society and publicly humiliated and psychologically broken.
- (v) Lalu the hero of the Trilogy's only escape is recruitment in the army. However, he comes back to find his family doomed.
- (vi) The dehumanization of a subject people is the root of social evil. Saros Cowasjee is of the view:

What Anand is saying that men are basically good. It is the system under which they lived that dehumanized them. And there is nothing more dehumanizing than subjection to foreign rule. On the other hand, the Indian Officers, with the exception of Lachman Singh

and Rikkiram, are dishonest, tyrannous and jealous qualities often fostered in a subject people.¹⁰

- (vii) Lalu's standpoint on the issue of freedom is to agitate against the landlords which lead him to his final imprisonment.
- (viii) *The Big Heart*, emphasizes likewise the struggle of the coppersmiths against the mechanization. Ananta, the reformist however, is aware of the potentiality of the Machine but is ultimately killed thereby bringing to an end his reformist zeal.
- (ix) Prince Victor, the degenerated prince in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince*, is responsible for the sordidness of life in his state.
- (x) Unhinged by his own maniacal pursuits and as a result of the instrument of accession of his state to Indian Union, Victor's life is a pitiable tragedy which finally ended up in the asylum.
- (xi) Another idealist who lays down his life in Maqbool Sherwani. Thereby highlighting the view that a hostile environment nips in the bud the potentiality and aspiration of the individual.

CHAPTER IV

Hopeful Humanism

The acceptance of man as the centre of all our thinking, feeling and activity, and the service of man for the greater good of all humanity, in the material world, under the sanctions of imagination, reason and creative democracy... to evolve individuals, potentially equal and free...¹¹

Humanism means love of man, the whole man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. It may be defined as a system of thought in which human interests, values and dignities are held dominant. Humanism implies devotion to the concerns of mankind. It is an attitude of man that concentrates on the activities of man rather than on the supernatural world and the world of nature. Historically, humanism is a Renaissance doctrine which stresses the essential worth, dignity and greatness of man as contrasted with the older view that man was wicked, worthless and doomed to destruction both in this life and the life to come. Renaissance humanism deriving from a study of ancient poets, historians and philosophers came to believe that man is capable of living a life of reason, dignity, morality and even happiness.

India was groaning the imperialistic rule of the Britishers when Anand was born. The people had lost their moorings; old values were crumbling; and new ones were yet to be articulated. Religion had become a matter of meaningless ritual and arid ceremony. Fatalism and superstition dominated the minds of poor masses. Nor did the alien rulers ever think of the necessity of integrating the aspirations of the

natives. The education imparted by the British Indian schools seemed to have no vital links with the genuine needs and interests of the ruled. It failed to enable the Indians either to acquire a clear understanding of his own culture or to get a correct appreciation of the European culture.

Most men lived lives fraught with squalor, poverty and caste-consciousness. Anand knew that the old world was dead and the European Renaissance had become a spent force. The rapid growth of science and the consequent Industrial Revolution had resulted in colonialism and imperialism. Simple values like love and beauty had receded to the background. In the midst of this, Anand came to realize that humanism with its respect for man and the message of 'live and let live' and compassion could restore peace and harmony to the war-torn world.

Mulk Raj Anand radically does not have a new concept of humanism. He admits that his humanism is the mingling of European Hellenism and the Renaissance ideal of all round development; the faith, in the possibility of achieving a better world order through science and international cooperation. He is influenced by oriental ideas and attitudes, however, he discards alike the supernatural and worldliness. He accepts Buddha's advocacy of Karuna; and the brotherhood of men preached by saints like Kabir and Nanak; Gandhi's championship of the untouchables repudiated en mass by society; and finally Nehru's affirmation of peaceful co-existence.

Anand insisted on the dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth. He stressed upon the practice of compassion as a sole value in his conception of the whole man. He attached great importance to art and poetry for developing the masses, his crusade was against superstition, feudalism and imperialism, an emphasis of his brand of humanism.

He declares his immense faith in the Protogorean dictum "*Man is the measure of all things*" for example the measure of all values and all actions related to the personality and potentiality of human beings. He firmly believes that man is capable of rising from the lower passions to magnificent heights of splendors and that he has in him, enough creative energy and imagination to transform and raise himself to glorious pinnacles of dignity and to rid himself of the unspeakable misery and pain inflicted on him by mankind, through his tireless physical and mental energy. It is to enable man to achieve these conditions which will help the emergence of a new ideal of the role of man in the vast universe that Anand fervently pleads for in his *Apology For Heroism (1946)* and *Prolegomena to a New Humanism (1958)*.

The humanism of Anand, however, does not rest on a divine sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhi. It puts its faith in the creative imagination and unconquerable spirit of man. It can be achieved through socialism, for socialism alone can restore economic and political freedom and thus help the growth of a full man. Anand believes that only his vision of humanism can restore order and decency in the world. His faith in humanism has also made him optimistic about the future of mankind. He is confident that nothing can wipe off or destroy humanity from the

face of the earth. The human heart is bound to survive all the destructive changes.

Purun Singh remarks in *The Big Heart (1945)*:

“Actually, no one can wipe out the whole of humanity. Only certain men can destroy the will of God by piling terror upon terror” Like most of his other humanist friends.¹²

It is the maintenance of this relationship of loving service, which constitutes the wholeness of Anand's ideal man. It is clearly pointed out as Iqbal Nath Sarsar in *Untouchable (1935)*, speaks of mechanizing the mode of the disposal of garbage which will ultimately eradicate caste. Sauda in *Coolie (1936)* exhorts the workers to go on strike for the betterment of their lot and Purun Singh in *The Big Heart (1945)* voices Anand's highest conception of value in human life. The protagonists of Anand often portray in their dedication towards universal compassion and tolerance of bhakti. De La Havre, the English physician of *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*, Lall in *The Sword and The Sickle (1942)*, Dr. Shankar in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)*, and Dhooli Singh, the enlightened landlord in *The Road (1963)* are the portrayals of exalted mankind.

Anand's humanism thus makes him a novelist with a mission and his theory of the novel is naturally in line with his commitment to his creed. His concern for the oppressed and the downtrodden is reflected in all his novels. All his heroes like Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo, Gangu, Lall and Ananta are unable to fight against the oppression and exploitation mounted against them in an organized manner. All of them passed through miseries, encountered all impediments boldly and emerged essentially unvanquished and hopeful. But Gangu's death, Bakha's return, Ananta's

death, Bhikhu's journey and Lall's turning into communist at the end of the novels do not suggest a pessimistic resignation but rather it paves the way for a hopeful vision of future.

If Anand's naturalism and humanism is viewed properly, then the inevitable third term arises: the relation between the two. For Anand, the third term is the Integrating Factor or what he called is Bhakti, the relation of personal, efficacious love, between the members of the units of society, family, community, nation or the world.

The new religion, a new value system supplanting superstitions, personal devotion to God by rational devotion to man are the values which Anand proposes to his countrymen. The traditional religion, he maintains, made men indifferent to the ills on this earth yet the new religion of bhakti, requires impassioned, practical efforts to remove not only external signs of ill, filth, poverty, pain, disease, hunger and ignorance but also the evils which are deeply rooted in social, political and economic institutions. According to Anand, outside *bhakti* there is no other world, therefore, if men are to find it at all, they must find its happiness here. The condition for human progress implies the fullest possible freedom and equality for all; *bhakti* strives towards such condition.

A chapter analysis would indicate the following:

- (i) Humanism emphasizes the love of mankind.
- (ii) "Man is the measure of all things" – a Protogorean dictum which is the

basic characteristic of Humanism.

- (iii) Anand's brand of humanism – dignity of man irrespective of caste, creed and wealth.
- (iv) In all the novels, there is a character who exemplifies the humanist. For example Iqbal Nath Sarsar in *Untouchable (1935)*, Sauda in *Coolie (1936)*, Dr. De La Havre in *Two Leaves and a Bud (1937)*. Again in *The Big Heart (1945)* Purun Singh speaks of the novel of human life, Dr. Shankar in *The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)* and Dhooli Singh in *The Road (1963)*.
- (v) On the crucial importance of integrating an individual into humanity Anand says:

But, if there is no war, from deep within the orbit of the Indian tradition of individualism, shorn of its religious sanctioned, may grow the gradual limitation of power of the state. Except that the old individualism will also have to shed its egoism and concern for personal salvation and take on the bhakti – Yoga, devotion through works which integrates the individual into community. ¹³

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the novels of Mulk Raj Anand impress us, as the products of the Indo Anglian Literary Naturalism – a break with the past, denial of religion and respect for science and sympathy for the individual in his conflict with the society. But the artistic exegesis of this philosophy involves a study of certain types of human behaviour in a hostile environment. This naturally results in a tedious stereotyping of the basic attitude of the writer under the thin veneer of diverse situations and different individuals. The final impression is one of the admirations for the solidity of factual details in the extreme precision in his study and presentation of man and the milieu, rather than for the fulfillment of art itself.

However, the achievement of Anand is not merely 'methodological'; nor do the protagonists of his novels always meet with death. The tragic destinies of the heroes of his novel do indeed suggest the remedy for the social disease, which arrests the healthy growth of the personality of the individual. Thus for example, industrialization or more precisely, mechanization is the remedy for the evils of untouchability. Scientific education and a socialist outlook can effectively put an end to the capitalistic exploitation; and a voluntary and free acceptance of this social reality in an organized way, can rectify the various wrongs of society.

Anand cannot in fact, be charge with pessimism or fatalism; as the ultimate aim of his protagonists is always social upliftment and human betterment. Although mechanistic determination is instrumental in bringing about the eventual catastrophe of the protagonist. The triumph of Anand seems to be in his transcendental comprehension of the social dynamics that determines the destiny of every individual. His imposition of the patterns of his own thought on the fictional papier mache of experience is in complete consonance with the philosophy of naturalism. As such, his novels are living milestones in the tradition of Indo-Anglian literary naturalism.

Despite the tragic notes of the novels, the ideas of scientific humanism are sustaining and pervasive in his novels. In fact, it is his consciousness of the need to raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and other suppressed members of society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair into which they are sunk, which has made him a naturalistic humanist.

Anand's humanism places man in the center of all things and believes in the ethical equality of all men. He feels that all men are equal and there should be no division of caste, creed, or race, which act as obstacles for human development and dignity. According to him, the conquest of pain should be the supreme goal of all individuals and all nations. He strongly condemns the cruelty and the pain inflicted upon the underprivileged by the higher sections of society and firmly believes that

one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse

the hearts of all men.

But even today, the solid bedrock of the national culture is being upheld in a fanatical manner in one form or the other. Man's life is determined by the social norms as we have miserably failed to develop a scientific outlook, which is the need of the hour. It is well nigh impossible for us to effectively shape the destiny of the oppressed, to improve the quality of life and to provide the basic necessities of life unless we are steeped in science. For science awakens the urge to inquire and research for the truth. This kind of attitude would probably help bring about a social change from hide bound traditional ties that has kept us in its vicious grip. Many of the social values that were upheld in the ancient times are outworn and irrelevant in the changing times, and are to be discarded once and for all. Therefore, what we need is not the militant revival of a moribund culture but the creation of dynamic contemporary society as envisaged by Mulk Raj Anand.

Mulk Raj Anand's novels can thus be read as a forerunner to the contemporary Dalit debates. The victims, the modern day counterparts of Bakha and Bhikhu, have come a long way in their struggle for cultural identity against divisive political and social forces. However, the hideous face of untouchability will perhaps remain as a painful lesson from our unredeemed past.